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AUTHOR O'Banion, John D.
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ABSTRACT

To bridge the gap between literature and composition, and between tradition and individual talent, teachers of literature and composition should consider how Roman rhetoricians integrated many arts into their instruction on oratory. With the perspectives of Cicero and Quintilian in hand, teachers would be inclined to stress rhetorical argumentation, which incorporates both narrative and logical reasoning. Characterizing the interrelationship between narrative and logical discourse is crucial for understanding the nature of rhetorical argumentation. Both Cicero and Quintilian emphasized the place of narration in preparing and arranging orations. Argumentation was understood as the blending of several arts into a complex whole. Viewed as a whole, classical oration had two faces--logical and narrative proof. Proof (confirmatio) was the decontextualized, explicit, logical version of the narrative; and the narrative (narratio) was the contextualized, personalized, implicit version of the proof. One way to provide a structure for teaching rhetorical argumentation in introductory courses is to provide students with questions which raise rhetorical consciousness and to require students to ask these questions of both the texts they read and the texts they produce. Through a rhetorical perspective, teachers can help provide students with guidelines for evaluating texts as well as for writing their own texts. (A list of questions and rhetorical argumentation, and 24 references are appended.) (MM)

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Bridging the Gap Between Literature and Composition: Rediscovering the Synthesis of Logical and Narrative Argumentation

John D. O'Banion

In our unguarded moments, we see ourselves as Prometheus, offering fire with which students might burn their way through the underbrush of commonly accepted notions and emerge with an insight that would, if not be an eternal flame, at least not flicker out a few days after the semester is over. However, students too often see us not as Prometheus but as Zeus, nailing their work with the hammers of correctness, discipline, and convention. Ironically enough, English teachers must play both roles, just as student writers must learn to give homage, in T. S. Eliot's words, to both tradition and individual talent, in order that classrooms might be places where, as Plato wished, fires break out between students and teachers, where students might acquire, if not intellectual fire, at least some of the kindling. Surely by the time students enroll for the second semester, whether in Composition II or Introduction to Literature, we should provide them with some full-sized logs. One problem in doing so is deciding which logs to burn in order to achieve the many goals--both traditional and innovative--proposed for our courses, such as those argued for in Winifred Bryan Horner's 1983 collection of essays, Literature and Composition: Bridging the Gap. The subtitle, which I have borrowed, continues to convey an important goal for English departments.

To bridge that gap, teachers of literature and composition should consider how Roman rhetoricians integrated many arts into their instruction on the oration. With the perspectives of Cicero and Quintilian in hand, they would be inclined to stress rhetorical argumentation, which, as I shall shortly explain, incorporates both narrative and logical reasoning. However, because of prevailing preconceptions, this recommendation may be rejected

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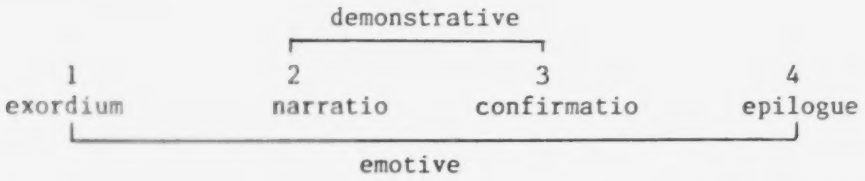
almost as soon as it is announced; therefore, some attention must be given to these preconceptions so the recommendation may be properly evaluated. First, most people associate argumentation solely with logic, and everyone knows how bloodless the study of premises and conclusions can be. Wayne C. Booth perceptively declares that "the view of rhetoric as persuasion to propositions" is "impoverished" (70). Martin Heidegger puts it even more bluntly: "This [formal] logic stalwartly taught by philosophy professors does not speak to its students. It is not only dry as dust; it leaves the student perplexed in the end." "There is need for another logic," Heidegger claims (5). For philosophers, he argues, this "other logic" should incorporate a historical perspective and should cease examining propositions as if they can be abstracted from the persons who state them and the situations in which they arise.

Fortunately, another logic, another way of understanding and teaching argumentation, is already being explored, by both philosophers and rhetoricians. Chaim Perelman and Stephen Toulmin have extended argumentation to include how it varies with audiences; and, in the same spirit, Ernesto Grassi and Donald P. Verene have defended Giambattista Vico's perspective on rhetoric and argumentation, which is one that pays attention not just to history, as Heidegger suggests, but to memory and narrative as well.[1] And therein lies the second preconception against which my recommendation is likely to be judged, for few theorists (or anti-theorists, for that matter) seem interested in including narrative in their conceptions of rhetorical argumentation. Even in the index to Perelman's New Rhetoric, the term is listed but two times; and there are no entries in Toulmin's Uses of Argument. It would appear, then, that the contemporary frame of mind does not include narrative in its understanding of argumentation.

Nevertheless, a host of contemporary scholars have been arguing for a renewed emphasis on narration in theories of thinking and arguing.[2] Perhaps, for brevity's sake, it is sufficient to call to mind the insights of two radically different scholars--Roland Barthes and Walter Fisher--whose work roughly corresponds to the "literary" and "rhetorical" camps that are so often at war in English departments. Though he subordinates narration to logical argument and both to his structuralist framework, Barthes has perceived that narratio played an important role in classical argumentation. He says:

> The syntagmatic order [of the oration] therefore does not follow the paradigmatic order, and we are faced with a chiasmus-construction: two slices of 'passional' material frame a demonstrative bloc:
>
> 
>
>
> We shall treat the four parts according to the paradigmatic order: exordium/epilogue, narration/confirmation. (77)

Barthes clearly sees narration and logical proof to be close allies in the oration; their specific relationship, which Barthes does not explain, is one key to integrating instruction in literature and composition.

In Human Communication as Narration, Fisher maintains that reasoning (as opposed to rationality) is narrative in form: "[K]nowledge . . . . is ultimately configured narratively" (19). He argues against viewing narration as a species of logic (typified in Barthes's stance, in which narratio and confirmatio are categorized as "demonstrative"). To the contrary, Fisher not

only encourages rhetoricians to incorporate narration into their conception of rhetoric (which, by and large, continues to pay more homage to the critique of arguments than to their generation), but he considers logic to be subsumed by narration: "Logic is now the province of formalized systems. This turn means that logic stands apart from issues such as those addressed by the narrative paradigm [that Fisher discusses]," which "can be considered a dialectical synthesis of two traditional strands that recur in the history of rhetoric: the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary, aesthetic theme" (35, 58).

Certainly Barthes and Fisher come at this issue from different vantage-points. Nevertheless, they agree that, in rhetoric, narrative and logical discourse are interrelated. Characterizing that interrelationship is crucial for understanding the nature of rhetorical argumentation, for bridging the gap between composition and literature, and for making the entire English curriculum truly valuable to students.

Guidance on how to integrate logical and narrative argumentation is available in Roman rhetoric. Both Cicero (who is, incidentally, one of Vico's key influences) and Quintilian emphasized the place of narration in preparing and arranging orations, and both can provide much insight into what Fisher calls a "dialectical synthesis" and what Barthes calls a "chiasmus-construction." But introducing the classical oration raises a third barrier, along with argumentation and narration. Kenneth Burke, for instance, argues that rhetoricians need to know how to shift "back and forth between 'philosophic' and 'narrative' terminologies of motives, between temporal and logical kinds of sequence" (Rhetoric of Religion 33); but he views exordium, narratio, divisio, confirmatio, refutatio, and peroratio as "set stages," "almost as formal as the movements of a symphony" (A Rhetoric of Motives 69).[3] And C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon are typical when they reject the "fixed"

pattern of the oration because "it's unhelpful in the classroom" (30). Nevertheless, instructors of composition and literature can benefit much by examining the Roman view of the oration, especially the role of narration in understanding and arguing a case.

For Cicero and Quintilian, argumentation was understood as the blending of several arts into a complex whole. Logic was only of those arts. As Cicero put it, "[O]ratory is the result of a whole number of things, in any one of which to succeed is a great achievement" (De Oratore 1.5.19); "[I]n an orator we must demand the subtlety of the logician, the thoughts of the philosopher, a diction almost poetic, a lawyer's memory, a tragedian's voice, and the bearing almost of the consummate actor" (1.28.128). Narration could also have been included in that list, as it is discussed in many often-overlooked passages in De Oratore. The narratio, Cicero says, is "the fountain head from which the whole remainder of the speech flows" (2.81.330); the narratio "open[s] up the sources from which the whole argument for every case and speech is derived" (2.30.130); "obscurity in the narrative," where one stressed one's perspective on the case, "blocks out the entire speech" (2.80.329). And, in a passage remindful of Perelman's concept of "presence," Cicero declared that, unless there is sufficient attention to narratio, "the definition [of the case] cannot reach the understanding and reason of the arbitrator, as it slips by him before he has taken it in" (2.25.109).[4] That narration was vital in preparing one's case, and not just in narratio, is evident also in many of Cicero's inventional methods, such as the following:

> It is my own practice to take care that every client personally instructs me on his affairs, and that no one else shall be present so that he may speak the more freely; and to argue his opponent's cause to him, so that he may argue his own and openly declare

> whatever he has thought of his own position. Then, when he has departed, in my own person and with perfect impartiality I play three characters, myself, my opponent and the arbitrator. (2.24.102)

"Role-playing," surely an art rooted in narration, is crucial in Cicero's rhetoric, for it assisted him in recreating, and in establishing the significance of, the events that led to any particular dispute.

In Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, one passage in particular can help to resolve the differences between Barthes and Fisher as well as to suggest how literature and composition might be integrated through an understanding of rhetorical argumentation. Quintilian clarifies the relationship of narrative and logical proof in the oration: "What difference is there between a proof and a statement of facts [narratio] save that the latter is a proof put forward in continuous form, while a proof [confirmatio] is a verification of the facts put forward in the statement?" (4.2.79). Though today many scholars are likely to follow in the footsteps of Peter Ramus and leave "proof" to the logicians and narration to the literary specialists, Quintilian saw them as synthesized, as dialectically related, as different versions of the same argument. Quintilian's view, which suggests that contemporary scholars such as Barthes and Fisher are recapturing a perspective long neglected, makes clear the nature of rhetorical argumentation.

Viewed as a whole, the oration, like Janus, had two faces--logical and narrative proof. They were related as figure is to ground and as object is to horizon. "Proof" (confirmatio) was the "congruent," decontextualized, itemized, explicit, systematic, logical version of the narrative; and the narrative was the "continuous," contextualized, personalized, implicit version of the proof. Narratio was one's case proffered in the form of a

story (however abbreviated in delivery), a continuous form that emphasized the sequence of events constituting the case (or the rhetorical situation); confirmatio (as well as refutatio) was one's case proffered in the form of a list of coherent proofs that emphasized the logical implications more or less embedded in the narratio.

Once Quintilian's perspective is understood, one is not surprised to find him declaring that narration is probably "the most important department of rhetoric in actual practice" (2.1.10); that "unless you see in advance [through narration] to what they [logical arguments] are to be applied," "[such] arguments are useless" (5.10.109); that narratio is necessary "in order to indicate our harrowing story in outline so that it may at once be clear what the completed picture is like to be" (4.2.123); that even when "the facts are against us," as in the "difficult" case, one cannot omit the narratio (as some had advised), for doing so would be "to throw up the case altogether" (4.2.66); that, in the narratio, one could "restate them [the facts] in a different way, alleging other motives and another purpose and putting a different complexion on the case" (4.2.76); and that silence in the face of an opponent's perspective (narratio) was to "give away the whole case" (4.2.78). For Quintilian, narration was crucial in that it provided "the completed picture" in terms of which the facts of a case made sense and without which they were "naked and helpless" (4.2.102).

Armed with the twin arts of logic and narration, rhetoricians can teach argumentation in a way that can enable students both to discern and create powerful arguments. But to grasp fully how rhetorical argumentation includes both narrative and logical proof and how such a perspective might inform English classrooms, one needs carefully to examine the nature of each kind of thinking and discourse, including how they were integrated in the classical oration. Such a task is beyond the scope of this paper; thus only a glimpse

of this perspective can be provided before suggesting one way to teach it to freshmen. (Interested readers may wish to examine my "Narration and Argumentation: Quintilian on Narratio as the Heart of Rhetorical Thinking," in which I argue that narrative was a primary mode of thinking and that narratio was a key to strategy.) Usually seen as mechanical "steps," the stages of the oration were instead interactive and dynamic, as Richard Leo Enos has argued. The stages were complementary functions of persuasion, that is, means by which a persuader could take an audience through the sequences of thinking that make persuasion possible. Each step captured, however implicitly, the case as a whole.

Responsible both to logic and to narration, each stage fulfilled an argumentative function by providing answers to questions that audiences would raise if given the opportunity to ask them. In the stages of the oration, rhetoricians sought to answer them and--usually, at least--in a psychologically significant order. Simplified for student use in composition and/or literature courses and formulated to suit writing as opposed to speaking, some of the more elementary questions might be: How can I capture and focus my reader's attention on the issue at hand? How can I make sure the reader is aware of the significance of the issue (for without common ground, further argument is useless)? Have I clearly defined the problem for which my writing is offered as a solution? What are the most powerful arguments I can present to justify my solution (or my view of the issue)? In what order shall I present my arguments? How do I decide? What kinds of evidence and how much evidence shall I provide? How much attention should I give to alternative positions or competing solutions? How should I conclude, so that my readers are reminded of all my arguments and are motivated to act upon the solution or perspective they justify?

One way to provide a structure for teaching rhetorical argumentation in introductory courses, and to do so in a way that integrates instruction in logical and narrative reasoning, is to provide students with many such questions. By using a list of questions to raise rhetorical consciousness and by requiring students to ask them both of the texts they read and the texts they are asked to produce, students would be well on the way to learning how to think as writers think. This paper concludes with a proposed list of questions, which are drawn from a variety of sources, too numerous to cite. (I make no claims regarding the thoroughness of the list.) If such questions are asked of many texts--out of class, through write-to-learn activities and/or formal essays; in class, through discussion--rhetorical argumentation can, through repetition, be acquired almost as second-nature. Little theoretical explanation is required, for providing such questions and exploring possible answers is implicitly to recommend a rhetorical perspective. As Kenneth Burke reminds us, reading an argument is as rhetorical a task as writing one: "[C]ritical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers, they are strategic answers, stylized answers" (The Philosophy of Literary Form 1).[5] To read a text looking only for "propositions" is to fall into the trap Heidegger and Booth warn against, but to read a text looking for the questions texts answer is to read rhetorically. I have merely taken Burke's view a step further by suggesting that the various parts of a text are tactical answers that, together, constitute a text's strategic answer; that is, such a question-and-answer method helps one to grasp the situation calling for the "strategic" and "stylized" nature of an author's answers. Doing so, I maintain, involves one not only in logical assessments but also narrative ones.

The classical oration is recommended as a pattern for interpreting (and producing) argument because of the dual allegiance it recommends to narration and logic and because, since few freshmen are aware of the prerequisites of argumentation, it seems best to begin with a tested pattern. The oration, of course, is not suited to every argument, and students should be encouraged to depart from the pattern whenever it seems to constrain them unnecessarily. But I am in agreement with Frederick Crews, who, in assessing the needs of his students, decided that "the bewildered majority needed not absolution from rules, but better rules. That is, they needed access to the principles actually followed by a practiced writer. . ." (162). And I agree with Robert Frost, who would surely have recommended that beginning poets would do well to master traditional forms, such as the ballad and the sonnet, before swimming in the more treacherous waters of free verse, for he said, ". . . I'd as soon write free verse as play tennis with the net down" (159). Similarly, for students to be taught the variety of argumentative patterns without first being grounded in any of them is like teaching a child to be an atheist before the child has learned to believe. Further, by considering the argumentative functions of the stages of the oration, the student is forced to consider many concerns important to argumentation that might otherwise be neglected, especially issues pertaining to narration.

Taught in this way, freshman English can help to accomplish several of the goals for English departments previously alluded to. In Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap, J. Hillis Miller declares: "There is no learning to write well without a concomitant learning to read well" (42); Elaine P. Maimon suggests, "We could ask students to do research to discover the questions different scholars might ask about [an issue]" (117); Booth asserts that "it is an important part of every writer's education to have thought about the differences [between various writers' "realities"] and to

have practiced the arts of making different portraits of what happened or what might have happened" (74) and that "[w]hat is most important is that students be asked not just to study the texts but to do something like the text, to practice the rhetoric the texts exhibit, and then to reflect . . . on that practice" (79); and David S. Kaufer and Richard E. Young recommend, among other goals, "a heuristic plan for teaching students fair ways to refute an opponent's position in argumentative writing" (154). And in The Rhetorical Tradition and Modern Writing, James L. Kinneavy declares that the heart of humanistic education, the "rhetorical component," is being neglected and that while students "continue to write themes that analyze literary masterpieces, they should also write persuasive themes . . ." (24, 25). One clear problem is how to be responsive to all such recommendations, especially since each has merit.

If argumentation were to be taught as I have suggested, giving at least some attention to all such goals is possible. In itself, a freshman course cannot do all these things; but it can, through a rhetorical perspective, help to provide some of the guidelines for evaluating whatever texts are examined in the course, as well as for how similar ones might be produced.

Whether this approach produces intellectual fire is unpredictable. But, at the end of the course, the teacher may confidently say, with Prometheus, "I gave them power to think," a gift inseparable from the ability to argue.

Notes

[1] Few rhetoricians would argue against the importance of history for rhetoric, for even those, such as C. H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon, who reject ancient theories as irrelevant must know the past and use the past to construct alternative approaches to rhetoric.

[2] For a few of the scholars contributing to a resurgent interest in narration as a way of thinking, besides Kenneth Burke and his theory of dramatism, see Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory (U of Notre Dame P, 1981); W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., On Narrative (U of Chicago P, 1981); Donald E. Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences (State U of New York P, 1988); Paul Ricouer, Time and Narrative, 3 vols. (U of Chicago P, 1984-88); and Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Johns Hopkins UP, 1982).

[3] For a brief introduction to the stages of the classical oration and how they incorporate a dialectical perspective, see my "An Alchemical Vision of the Origins of Dispositio."

[4] "Presence" is discussed frequently in Perelman's New Rhetoric, especially pp. 115-20, 144-48, and 357-60. Unfortunately, Perelman does not align "presence" with narration, though some of his characterizations of "presence" are similar to Cicero's and Quintilian's views of narration and narratio. For instance, he emphasizes the need, in argument, for "filling the whole field of consciousness with this presence so as to isolate it, as it were, from the hearer's overall mentality" (118).

[5] For a discussion of the philosophical implications of a question-and-answer method of reading, see R. G. Collingwood's An Autobiography (1939; London: Oxford UP, 1982), especially "Question and Answer," pp. 29-43.

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QUESTIONS AND RHETORICAL ARGUMENTATION

Note: The following questions are tentative in nature. Several of them could have been placed differently, and many important questions have probably been omitted. For the sake of brevity, questions of/for writers are not included. They would simply be revisions of readers' questions. For instance, the first question below could be restated: "Am I genuinely interested in my readers' points of view?" The asterisk (*) indicates questions that, in varying degrees, include narrative concerns.

RHETORICAL FUNCTION	QUESTIONS OF/FOR READERS
EXORDIUM	Is the writer genuinely interested in my point of view? Is she of good will? Does he seek to engage me? How? Does she seek to gain my attention? Does he focus my attention on an issue or problem? How? What are the techniques or methods that seem to work best with me? *Is the opening straightforward or subtle? Declarative or insinuative? What kind of opening gets me to want to read further? Do I prefer indirect approaches? What does the writer think of himself or herself? Of me or other readers? Of the subject-matter? Of language? Of the role of language in persuasion? *What kind of expectations does the opening create for me? *Does the opening create an atmosphere of dialogue or of monologue? Does he single out particular kinds of readers?
*NARRATION	Is the writer aware of the importance of the topic? Does she invite me to assess the topic's importance before proceeding to "arguments"? What methods or techniques does she use to stress the significance of the issue? Or her approach to it? Am I able to discern his point of view before he declares it explicitly? Does the writer view me as passive? As a thing? Does she imply that consensus is important? That my views matter? Does she establish common ground (values, attitudes, purposes)? Does he connect the issue with specific situations? Does she help to clarify the situation her writing is designed to confront? Does he make me aware of how the topic has been treated before? How does she want me to view the issue or problem? Do I understand the writer's intentions? Does the writer seem to be affirming or reaffirming a perspective or an idea? Does she wish to purify an idea or image ("cleanse" it, say, of misunderstanding)? Does he

wish to undermine or discredit an idea or opinion? Does she present an "absurd" idea? (Is she nihilistic?)
Does the writer leave the impression that the discovery stage of writing was exciting?
Are there values being declared? Are they implicitly stated?
Are these values relevant to the issue or problem?
What would result if I (or everyone) adopted the values and perspective being recommended?
Are these values confirmed by my own experience? By others I respect?
Do these values represent a good ideal for human life and conduct?
Does the argument encourage me not only to be free but to act on my freedom? Does it make me feel responsible?

DIVISION or PARTITIO

Does the writer declare his position (on the issue or problem) in a straightforward way?
Is there an explicit thesis sentence? If not, can I figure out why not?
Does the writer seem aware that her thesis has an antithesis? That a synthesis may be possible?
Does the writer's position or solution invite me to join with the writer in some way?
Am I encouraged to rethink my views? Take action?
Does the thesis imply that I am viewed as likely to disagree?
Does the writer make me aware she has considered opposing views?
How has the writer done so?
Does his doing so (or not doing so) make me more likely to read further?
Is the writer conscious that her argument is part of an on-going process and that her view, as well as mine, may have to be altered as further dialogue is offered by others?

CONFIRMATIO

Does the writer present cogent reasons for agreeing with her view or solution?
Can I identify the nature of the arguments?
Does the argument rest upon the definition or redefinition of certain terms?
Do such definitions occur in one place or are they dispersed throughout the essay?
*Does the writer focus on how the issue or problem arose? On how solutions have arisen? Are these issues treated before the "arguments" are presented, or in the "middle" of the paper? Is it important where such matters are discussed?
Does the argument depend upon agreement with evaluations? Do I recognize the ideal (definition) underlying the evaluation? Does the writer?
Does the writer make any proposals or recommendations? Have they been adequately prepared for? Do I feel motivated to act upon them?
*Are there sufficient examples provided? Are they relevant? Do they point toward general principles?

Is there adequate evidence to support the arguments?
Can I identify the nature of the evidence? Is it in the form of data, statistics, conclusions of authorities, case studies (*) etc.?
If authorities, do I respect them?
Has the writer encouraged my respect for them?
What kind of evidence is most persuasive for me?
Do I know why? Does it depend on the topic?
Do I find myself recalling earlier portions of the argument? Does the writer explicitly remind me of earlier statements? Why?
Is the evidence fresh, up-to-date, relevant, honestly used?
*Does the writer mention all the arguments possible?
Would I add any? Why might she have omitted some arguments?
*Does the writer leave out evidence I am aware of? How do I feel about that? Do I trust him less?
*Are the arguments related to any common issue? Is any common ground explicitly called attention to? In the "middle" of the essay or elsewhere? What difference would it make to place such material in various places in an essay?
*Do I feel as if I am engaged in a dialogue? If asked, could I help the author succeed (or fail) in her argument?
Are the arguments logically coherent? Would they pass a logician's scrutiny? If not, does the writer recognize the limitations of his case?
Do I detect any fallacious reasoning? Any name-calling? Unwarranted conclusions? Irrelevant issues? Does she, for instance, present atypical data and yet reach universal conclusions?
*Do the reasons and evidence correspond with my expectations (as generated by the Introduction)?
What in the writing makes me confident about the writer? What makes me cautious?
*Does the writer seem willing to apply his own practice of persuasion on himself?

REFUTATIO

Does the author pay any attention to other perspectives or solutions?
Does she treat them fairly?
Does he cite enough of them for me to understand if they have any merit?
Would I treat any of them differently? Why?
Are there any counter-arguments I would add? Does the author seem to invite such contributions?

PERORATIO

Is the writer able to conclude the case briefly? Is she too brief? What could be done to make it more effective?
*Does the writer's argument seem to arise from a consideration of how the issue/problem has affected people in the past? How it is affecting people in the present? How it will affect people in the future?

*Does the writer suggest the implications of her argument? Does he suggest the consequences of a widespread agreement with his argument?
*Does the ending make any emotional appeals? If so, to what emotions?
*Are the appeals overdone? Do they encourage action of some sort?
*Does the writer summarize her reasons and evidence? Effectively?
*Does the writer return to any points raised in the Introduction? If so, why? What is accomplished?
*Have I been asked to do anything? If so, am I able to do so?
*Does the argument treat me as a whole person? Does it integrate logical and emotional appeals?
*Would I be able to be true to myself and still act on the writer's view?
*Have I been asked to alter my view of myself?